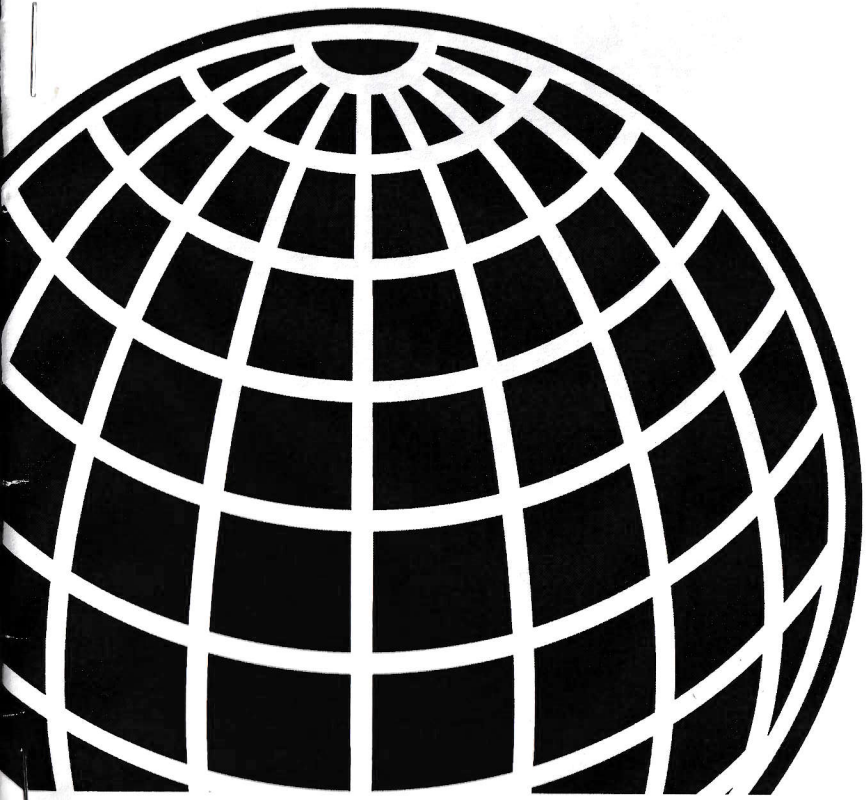
ONE BIG UNION

The Principles and Goals of the Industrial Workers of the World



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NINTH EDITION

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PUBLISHED BY:
INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD
PO BOX 180195
CHICAGO, IL 60618

Introduction

The Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) is a labor union that seeks to organize the working class into One Big Union. Our aim is to empower the working class by unionizing our workplaces, building mass organizing capacity and class consciousness, and creating the infrastructure to end capitalism so we can live in a new society. We can accomplish these goals through industrial unionism, direct action, and radical union democracy. Contained in this pamphlet are the basic explanations for how society is currently organized, how it should be organized, how the IWW organizes industrially, and why we believe our program is best. Workers who agree with the ideas presented in this pamphlet can take out an IWW membership card and start organizing today.

How Is Society Currently Organized?

A network of bosses, billionaires, and multinational corporations currently direct our economic, political, and social lives. They control industry—the organization of labor that provides the goods and services people need for survival and well-being. Around the world, all industries are interconnected, all bosses are interconnected, but the people who do the work are not yet organized.

What Is Industry and Who Controls It?

Industry is central to our economic life. The capitalists who own and control the natural resources and facilities necessary to transform raw materials into goods, and who manage the labor force that provides services, form the smaller of two classes in society. Workers who gather raw materials, transform materials into usable goods, and provide services society needs are the other, and much larger class.

The interests of the working and capitalist classes are opposed. Many of our troubles are shaped by this fact. At the top of the modern economic pyramid are the few: the wealthy and powerful. They are an oligarchy who exercise unchecked power over the economic functioning of the world. They pursue their private interests at the expense of the vast majority of humanity, and often at the expense of the very ecological vitality of the Earth that sustains us all.

Members of the capitalist class enjoy privileges that come from having power and are anxious to stay in control. To make that power secure, they seek to gain or keep control of all social institutions. They want the government to write and administer laws that work in their favor. They want the schools to teach respect and obedience to the privileged few. They exert influence over the press, television, and film to serve their interests. And where they cannot get rid of the power that we have built—through our unions and our labor—they try to control us, too.

Capitalists are threatened with the loss of their control because we, the working class, can collectively take control of industry in order to establish a more just, functional, and fulfilling society.

How Did We Get to This Point?

Modern industries are the result of a steady process of privatization and consolidation over hundreds of years. Capitalists, looking to increase their wealth and control, organized workers into industries that could be most effectively managed. Because capitalist industries prioritize extracting profit for the bosses, they are not necessarily the most effective at producing goods, providing services, or creating workplaces where our dignity as workers is respected.

Left unchecked, capitalists' greed knows few limits. Industries as we know them today developed in part through violent strategies of domination such as colonialism and slavery. Through colonialism, capitalists used military might to force their way into new markets, lay claim to land and resources, and remove or exterminate inhabitants from their homes and communities. During the transatlantic slave trade, capitalists forced enslaved people to migrate across the Atlantic Ocean where their bodies and labor became commodities to be bought and sold. These methods for land acquisition, resource accumulation, and labor exploitation shaped modern industries from farming to textiles to domestic labor to prison labor.

Under capitalism, technology developed at an unprecedented pace. Our ways of producing and living have changed faster in the last two hundred years than in the previous two thousand. However, our standard of living has not kept pace with invention because capitalists control industry. Rather than innovation contributing to abundance and leisure in our lives, it is wasted in artificially created shortages and depressions. Innovation has also been siphoned into military technologies to surveil and destroy. Wars over resources and labor continue to be fought so that fewer and fewer capitalists can control nearly all of the world's wealth.

Much of today's labor is based on the wage system. Workers are paid a small percentage of the wealth they create in exchange for hours of their lives. With these wages, workers must then pay for the goods and services that allow them to live, such as food and housing. If we do not work, we do not earn a wage, and we cannot survive, and so we are in essence wage slaves. Unorganized workers are at the whim of their bosses, who set their wage and therefore determine the workers' standard of living.

The few people who control the world's resources have many servants, but few friends. If the control of industry were taken out of their hands and shared among everyone else, the rest of us would be much better off.

How Are Things Produced Now?

All industries are interrelated. There is really only one industry: providing goods and services. The survival of our communities requires a variety of interdependent labor that we all share in together.

For example, consider your shirt and the processes necessary for its production. Workers grew and harvested the cotton, other workers sewed it, others dyed

it. It required not only labor and materials, but also the buildings where it was made and machinery that supported production. It required vehicles for transportation and logistical planning and distribution. The workers involved in all these processes, in turn, live in homes built by workers and eat food grown and prepared by workers. In fact, it is difficult to think of anything workers do anywhere that does not have some connection with the production of a simple shirt.

But this work is not random or chaotic. It is subdivided and organized into specialized areas, much like the organs of a living body. The Industrial Workers of the World is organized into six major industrial departments:

- 100 - Growing and raising raw materials
- 200 - Extracting and mining raw materials
- 300 - Constructing infrastructure
- 400 - Manufacturing raw materials into food, clothing, tools, machinery, etc.
- 500 - Providing transportation-, tech-, and communication-related services
- 600 - Providing public services including those offered by schools, hospitals, caregivers, theaters, shops, and public utilities

The table at the end of this pamphlet contains the six corresponding departments into which industrial unions are organized. Within the departments are the industries and their industrial unions. Because of the interrelations that bind all productive efforts together, it is impossible to mark off the territory of each industry. Accordingly, the lines separating industrial unions should not be thought of as a way of keeping the workers apart, but simply as an organizational tool to put power in the hands of workers.

How Should Society Be Organized?

What if workers, instead of corporations, governments, or bosses, decide how we want resources to be shared? Not simply goods and services, but also access to housing, transportation, medicine, and so forth?

What if you go into work, and instead of a boss telling you what to do, you collaborate with your coworkers? Or elect a project manager? What if you insist on having the proper tools for the job and the right safety equipment? What if you have the right to say no to tasks that harm yourself, others, or the environment?

And what if you could collaborate with workers in other workplaces and even other industries, rather than wasting time and resources in competition?

Who Should Hold Power?

When we think about democracy, people usually think about the decision we make once or twice a year at the ballot box, where we elect someone to run our social, economic, and political lives. But it never has been safe to let a few control the affairs of the many, and it never will be safe.

Under capitalism, our increased productive capabilities have increased the power of the ownership class. Their wealth allows them to buy influence in politics, the media, and over other aspects of our social lives.

Seemingly every time we give more power to someone to fix the situation, the problems get worse. And this holds true whether we allow that power to fall to the present managers of industry, their friends in government, or their friends in the undemocratic business unions. Rather than giving power to one leader or to one political party, the best choice is economic democracy—industries run by those who do the work using democratic procedures on a daily basis for the equal benefit of all.

What capitalists and politicians fear is democracy, which is nothing more than rule by the people. This is why capitalists fight to keep democracy out of their factories, their mines, and their stores, and when it suits them, capitalists ask the government to intervene and break strikes, arrest union leaders, and levy fines against workers. This is why capitalists seek to privatize our public services, such

as our schools or public parks, and either "run them like a business" or defun them entirely. This is why capitalists spend so much of the money that they stol from our labor on lobbying, PR campaigns, and media to take away our voices ever in issues that involve our very survival, from climate change to food security an water rights to pandemics.

We do not fear democracy: we believe it should be the backbone of our economic, social, and political life. We want control over our own labor because it is such a central part of who we are and what we do. We believe those who do the labor should have a voice in how it is conducted.

Industrial Democracy

Put another way, who should control the organization of labor that provides the goods and services people need for survival and well-being?

- Should it be controlled by a handful of business owners and managers?
- Should it be administered by politicians?
- Or should it be run by those who do the work?

Presently the capitalist class and the politicians work together to govern how the economy functions.

A relatively tiny number of people control industry and commerce: capitalists, who own the factories, stores, mines, etc., and politicians, who protect the interests of the capitalist class with laws, police, and the military. So the working class—which includes almost everyone and produces nearly everything—has little control over our own daily activities.

The strength of workers lies in solidarity.

Industrial democracy means workers manage our own industries and our own labor. We should manage industry democratically because workers are an overwhelming majority of our society and produce all wealth. Only we have the knowledge necessary for industry to function. Without the working class, industry does not exist. We should be deciding among ourselves whether or not industry is productive or idle, what is produced and how, and who should have the wealth we create.

Through working together democratically, we can run industry ourselves and thereby solve the problem of power. We can stop doing what we are told to do and start doing what we collectively decide to do, depriving our opposition of power and gaining it for ourselves. We can keep alive the democracy that cannot survive when practiced only on election day. We can gain security in basic needs like food and shelter, and the freedom that comes from being secure in our well-being. We can make organized society a harmonious whole, working for the good of all.

Working class organization must serve two purposes:

- it must provide the most efficient structure for carrying on our short-term struggle for better conditions and better pay;
- in the long term, it must provide a comprehensive and flexible solution to issues regarding the production and distribution of goods in an equitable and ecologically sustainable manner through the efficient management of modern industry by organized labor.

To unite the working class industrially, we also seek to end racial, religious, gender, and political discrimination. What is needed is One Big Union of all workers no matter what their language, what their beliefs, or what the color of their skin may be. In the union all are equal because we are all equally used by the same system. We will never be One Big Union if we allow prejudice to divide us from within.

Fortunately, but not by coincidence, the same type of organization best serves these purposes: a labor union based on mutual support, solidarity, and democracy. Through organizing collectively, as one international union, the IWW builds toward the future.

How Employers Organize: We Can Do Better

Workers must not simply imitate employer organizations, but from them we can learn some general principles.

Employers organize on an industrial basis, in federations, associations, lobbying groups, and trade organizations to run their industries to get the most out of them. This means running us so that they get the most out of us. They organize to maintain their position over us as our bosses.

Employers have many reasons to compete or quarrel with each other, yet they manage to cooperate. They organize special bodies for special purposes, and don't mix these purposes up. For example, they don't split up their trade association or federation over their political differences. There isn't a Republican Chamber of Commerce and a Democratic Chamber of Commerce. Their organizations are based on class interest rather than small political differences.

They have built many intricate financial organizations, including multinational corporations. Through these organizations the capitalists of even supposedly hostile nations work together. Many of their most critical undertakings depend on an unwritten mutual understanding of their collective interest. They make it hard for any employer who does not play along with them. And they have managed to keep on running the world although they have repeatedly made a mess of it.

Employers organize so that they can dominate others, so in this critical way we are different from our bosses. As workers, how do we do better? We organize to form bonds of mutual cooperation and mutual aid within and across our industries. We can:

- cooperate with each other instead of competing;
- organize special bodies for special purposes, and not mix these purposes up;
- remind ourselves of our collective interests;
- make life hard for any employer who does not play along with us.

We can do all these things by organizing as a union.

One Class, All Trades—One Union

Somewhere in the One Big Union plan there is a logical place for every worker, so that all fellow workers can most effectively exercise their solidarity. Let us consider how the One Big Union is structured.

In the IWW, we are all members of the same union with a voice and vote directly on our own union affairs. We can freely transfer to and from industrial unions as we change jobs.

Employers hire workers to do many different jobs, so the rule that all workers at the same employer belong to the same industrial union may seem strange at first. For instance, in a hospital, besides nurses, doctors, technicians, interns, etc., there are laundry workers, cooks, electricians, and many others, all of whom are in the same industry, and therefore in the same industrial union of Health Service Workers I.U. 610. When deciding which industrial union classification we should have, and which industrial union we should join, remember the practical purpose: to organize ourselves effectively to build power, while reminding us that we are all interconnected. We can reach out for help within and between industries, types of work, and job branches. And we can provide solidarity in that same way.

Our job or shop branch organizes the place we work; only those working there have a voice or vote on that workplace's issues. Each job organization is responsible for itself, but can not adopt rules contrary to the general Constitution and Bylaws of the Industrial Workers of the World. Whether we are teachers, factory workers, domestic laborers, or carpenters, our work cuts across industries and we rely on each other.

The One Big Union structure avoids disputes about jurisdiction spurred by the complexities of modern production processes. For example, it makes sense for workers in the metal mining industry to unionize together. However, not all metals are mined; some are obtained through chemical reactions. Should the workers who produce those metals be unionized as miners, chemists, or something else? In the IWW, we are all in the same union. How we organize and collaborate is up to us—the workers.

Some of the industrial unions listed at the end of this booklet may appear to have too wide a scope for convenience; truck drivers, commuter rail workers, and food workers in passenger stations may seem to be more than one union, Ground Transport and Transit Workers Industrial Union 530, but this system permits subdivision of a section for practical reasons. IWW members can always propose new, more practical industrial union classifications as changing economic conditions may require. Also, all the workers on one job form their own job or shop branch, and in it decide all matters that relate exclusively to that particular job.

If it were not for the One Big Union idea, such industrial organization might create some problems. The laundry workers in hospitals might want to meet with other laundry workers to establish standard conditions in all laundries. With One Big Union to which they all belong, they have all the infrastructure for doing so, and for electing any committees to carry out their decisions. Delivery drivers, if they work for a shop or a factory, belong in the job unit and industrial union of their fellow employees. Yet they may want to meet with other drivers to agree on a common policy in regard to loading, using helpers, or the like. Union democracy in the One Big Union enables them to do that, too. In any job situation, apprentices, trainees, and workers all have more in common with each other than with the boss. One Big Union welds them all together to fight the bosses with the combined strength of the entire workforce.

The Organization of Industry

The aim of the IWW is to organize the working class into structures corresponding to the facts of industry. We use a system of classification to help us conceptualize the various industries in which we organize workers.

Industrial Classification

The list of Industrial Unions currently used by the IWW is found at the end of this pamphlet. Workers at the same employer are to be members of the same industrial union.

Our numbering system is like the system used by libraries to catalog their books: no matter what book is written about any subject, there is a logical number to assign it so that it will be organized with all the other books ever written on the same subject. Similarly, there is a logical grouping for every worker in the One Big Union plan of the IWW.

The One Big Union provides coordination between these industries, not only because we believe the working class should all be organized into One Big Union, but also because there may come a time when multiple industries need to cooperate together on a joint action. For instance, the education industry requires teachers, paraeducators, tutors, administrative workers, cafeteria workers, janitors, and bus drivers, and the transportation industry requires drivers, logistics staff, warehouse workers, and mechanics. Education workers may all be employed by the same school or university, or they may belong to multiple private employers contracted to a school district, and transportation workers may be employed by numerous different companies or one conglomerate. But even if transportation workers make deliveries to schools, it makes the most sense for education workers to be in one industrial union, and for transportation workers to be in another because they share a common workplace and working conditions.

But, for effective working-class solidarity, it is necessary that workers be able to plan jointly with either their fellow workers in their own industries, or with their fellow workers in related industries. Only with the sort of industrial unionism that adds up to One Big Union is this cooperation possible.

ndustrial Departments

Unions in allied industries constitute industrial departments. The advantages of such organization are especially obvious in the instance of transportation. Railways, bus companies, truck companies, airlines, all provide ubstitute methods of transportation. If workers in these various industries are rganized to act together when the occasion arises, they will have the advantage in he class war. So great is their united power that it might be said that the destiny of he world is in their hands.

Think how much suffering humankind might save if organized transport workers refuse to load or carry goods to any warring nations, or to any nations whose transport workers do not follow the same policy. It would be a good investment if organized labor paid these transport workers for lost wages to prevent war, with hardship to none.

Or consider how similar arrangements could make it foolish to hire scabs by making it impossible for scab-made goods to be carried. If we workers stick together right, we cannot be beaten down.

What is proposed here is the organization of the working class so that it can stick together in effective solidarity. Every union member who has talked about unionism to other workers is all too familiar with the complaint, "A union is all right, but the trouble is that workers won't stick together." We don't believe that complaint.

We don't believe it because we have seen so often the efforts of workers to stick together, and seen those efforts shattered by faulty organization that stopped them from practicing solidarity. Things do substantially what they are built to do; the same stuff goes into making a bicycle and push mower, and each behaves differently because it is put together differently.

Organization does not just happen; it is made to happen. Do your part.

The same workers can be in a loose federation of organizations formed to serve some special sets of interests, or they can be in One Big Union. If a union is designed to keep us separated, then it will not be a surprise to find that "Workers won't stick together." But if we are organized to stick, then stick we will and be strong in the fact that we can.

Rational industrial unionism designed by the IWW to meet the conditions of modern industry emphasizes these basic rules:

- all workers on the same job, regardless of trade, belong in the same job organization;
- all workers in the same industry belong in the same industrial union;
- all members of these industrial unions belong directly as members of the One Big Union of the working class;

- any worker changing jobs is entitled to transfer free of charge to the industri union covering the new employment—"once a union member, always a unic member";
- no part of the labor movement should accept any obligation to work on mat rials furnished by strikebreakers, or to furnish material for them, or to fill th orders that strikers were supposed to fill; or cross any picket line, or aid in ar way to break the strike of any group of workers.

Such is the form of organization the IWW offers to make the working class invin cible. Are you with us?

Other Practical Advantages

Industrial Union structure is designed to unite workers in the way that will b most convenient for us. With whom can we best bargain collectively? Wit whom are we most likely to go out on strike? Such questions as these are th practical ones that decide in what industrial union any group of workers should b placed. The kitchen crew on an oil rig, the mess department aboard ship, the sta of a factory canteen, all do the same sort of work as that done by the employees of restaurant, but they can bargain more effectively if they are organized respectivel with other oil workers, maritime workers, and factory workers.

In distribution, these common sense rules must be applied. Where th workers involved distribute only one company's products, as with many gasolin stations, it will be best to organize with the workers supplying the product. Th workers in the oil fields and refineries will be in a better bargaining position if the can cut off the distribution of their product. Similarly the bargaining position of th gas station attendants is better with the backing of those other workers employe by the same company. Crews on oil tankers however may find it best to organiz with other maritime workers, but they will not touch "hot oil" in oil worker's strike

But where there are no such close relations with production, distributio workers will be better off organized together whether they work in departmen stores, clothing shops, or whatever. In all these instances it should be plain tha unless industrial unionism adds up to One Big Union the labor movement will b hindered in providing the different types of coordination that varying circum stances require.

One Big Union is the glue that holds the industrial departments togethe Without it they would fall into a useless, disorganized confusion.

The Practical Policies of the IWW

In the IWW, we run our union the same way we think the workplace should be managed. Our principles of solidarity and democracy must extend to all union members to the best of our ability. We have developed practical policies that help us work together more smoothly while avoiding all forms of top-down management. The following sections explain our policies and why we need them.

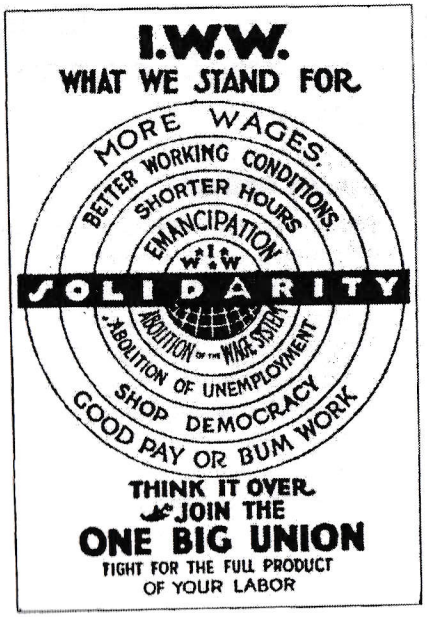
Union Democracy

Because the purpose of the IWW is to establish democracy in our everyday life, the structure of the union itself must be based on the two basic principles of democracy and solidarity. We weave these principles into the running of our union through our practical policies.

Our democratic policies safeguard the union from control by authoritarian political groups or factions. Authoritarian leadership around the world and throughout history is constantly working to herd labor into an organization open to authoritarian rule. The power of One Big Union must be wielded by us, not over us.

As protection against any faction running this union to suit itself, the following safeguards have been devised:

- officers of the General Administration are elected to one-year terms;
- there are term limits for officers;
- all officers are elected by referendum ballot, on which all members



they represent may vote—all members in job branches for the officers the industrial union branches that unite them; all members in the indust for industrial union officers; and all members of the IWW for officers of t general organization;

- all officers are subject to recall by majority vote.

Election, not appointment, is the uniform policy with the exception of con mittee vacancies which may be filled by a public vote of the elected General Exe utive Board.

As a key part of making sure members can fully and equally participate in th democratic running of our Union, we also make our Union a safer and more we coming place. For example:

- through our Safer Spaces policy, we strive to keep our common places free oppressive action, behavior, and language. Members with a concern can bri it to an officer of the union or to the Gender Equity Committee;
- we believe in the idea that "An Injury to One is an Injury to All";
- our conflict resolution processes are spelled out in the Constitution. Th favor mediation, but when a charge is made, it is handled by an elected con mittee of workers, and the results can also be appealed to the entire membe ship at our annual Convention.

When the IWW says it wants more of the good thing in life, we're not just talking about getting the bosse to fork over a bit more cash. We want a better life her and now.

Direct Action

Like democratic control of our union, the practice of direct action puts power i workers' hands. The IWW is famous for direct action, which we define as th actions taken by workers on the job to win demands from their bosse Direct action may include petitions, confrontations with the boss, slowdowns, even strikes. Long strikes may ultimately be necessary, but the IWW avoids ther as much as possible. We prefer short strikes and other job actions timed to d the most good for the least cost to members. Do we necessarily have to walk ou because a fellow worker is fired? If instead, we go to work expressing our sorro for bad treatment through the quality of our collective work, it costs us nothin and costs the company a lot. Our power is on the job. We can teach the bosses a important lesson: if they mess with our fellow workers, we can mess with the flo of production.

Long ago the IWW modernized the West Coast lumber industry in the United tates and Canada. Our members established the eight-hour day by blowing their wn whistle at the end of eight hours and quitting work then instead of carrying n for the additional two or four hours the bosses expected. Some crews were red, but the next crew hired blew their own whistle too, until the eight-hour day ecame established practice.

Here are some more recent examples of direct actions used by IWWs and eir fellow workers:

Sweltering kitchen workers in a restaurant complained for days about broken cooling fans. The workers installed their own fan in an open window. The next day, they came to work to find new fans installed. At a different restaurant facing similar conditions, workers walked out of dangerously hot conditions, forcing the owner to hire an air conditioning repair service within the week.

When apple pickers in Eastern Washington were told the piece rate was being cut by 10% per bin of fruit picked, they simply filled the bins by 10% less. When threatened with loss of their jobs, they just walked out of the orchard. Desperate to get the harvest in, the orchard owner immediately gave in and instituted the original piece rate. This action spread to neighboring orchards.

Speed up of the conveyor line at a pickle packing plant resulted in an unusual number of broken jars, causing the line to shut down to avoid product contamination. Management got the message and a slower belt speed again became the norm.

After two workers tried to cash paychecks during coffee break, and were informed by the bank there were 'insufficient funds', workers in a small sewing shop informed the boss they would be back from the break when they had a written guarantee that checks would never bounce again. Faced with partially completed products on the sewing tables, the owner caved within an hour.

Vietnamese immigrant workers at a mushroom farm didn't like the rickety wooden ladders provided to reach upper-level compost beds. They put red flags on the ladders and refused to use them.

Management was shocked that both the Vietnamese and English speaker
the shop refused to take over those jobs until new ladders were purcha
It seems that the communication barrier wasn't as insurmountable as
bosses hoped.

The logic of direct action is simple enough. If we stop doing what we are told to
and start doing what we collectively decide to do, there isn't much that can stop
The IWW expects to build a decent world in that simple way.

Job Action and Legislation

As a union, we can apply the lessons learned from direct action on the j
to other political issues as well. For example, as workers and as memb
of communities, we may take political positions on how we would like
protect our homes and families. One method is to try to get laws passed, and th
try to have them enforced.

But the simpler, more reliable, and certainly more helpful way to develop o
capacity to solve our own problems would be for us to refuse to work in any way th
endangers any community. Through direct action and the democratic decisions
the working class, we can refuse to build unsafe factories. We can also refuse
engage in work that creates pollution, waste, or other environmental damage. V
can force our employers to abandon racist and sexist policies. We can refuse
provide the police and agents of repression w
their tools. We can't resolve these issues witho
taking industrial action.

The job is the only place where you can win your demands.

One Big Union makes labor all power
Once labor is properly organized, lawmak
have to take notice. And if they don't, it wo
matter, because the working class can accomplish its own goals without the
Laws are based on actual practice. It is best for labor to concern itself with co
trolling actual practice through the organization of industry. If we organize o
industries, then the lawmakers will have to bend to our will.

Dues-Funded, and No Dues "Checkoff"

The dues payment policy of the IWW helps ensure union democracy. "T
power of the purse" stays in the hands of members in both collection a
spending of dues. We do not seek funding from governments, foundatio
corporations, or even nonprofits, because such monies always come with strin
and because, in the long term, they always change the focus of an organization. W
have a sliding scale dues system, set by a vote of the membership, and we vote
how to spend the money we raise.

The IWW uses direct dues payment to the union by its members. It has

ountable system of delegates who are elected and authorized to sign up new
mbers into the union and collect dues and other payments. Delegates report
financial transactions, which are then audited by the branch secretary, doc-
ented on a branch report, sent to General Headquarters for review, and
orted to the membership. Every year, the membership audits accounts of local
d regional union administrations. No assessments can be levied except when
proved by a vote of those who have to pay them.

The IWW does not accept the "checkoff" system, where the bosses deduct
ion dues from paychecks and then hand the money over to union officials. This
ethod makes bosses the bankers for the union. Checkoff short circuits a direct
ancial connection between union members and their elected representatives.

Checkoff is a tactic bosses use to make union dues seem like just another
pleasant tax deduction from the paycheck. It makes the union seem more like
hird party (such as an attorney) that we hire, rather than our own organization
at we participate in and control. It involves management in internal union rela-
nships that are none of its business.

Checkoff also allows the bosses to maintain control over the financial well-be-
of the union and encourages corruption. When union treasurers receive
eckoff dues from the company, they have a reason to care more about the
od will of the company than the good will of the members. With that revenue,
rrupt, sell-out union officials could make deals with bosses behind the workers'
cks, hire their friends to control union meetings, and keep themselves in power
running the union as a mere dues-collecting agency in the interests of the
mpany and union leaders. If they do something the membership doesn't like,
ey are not faced with lagging dues payments and delinquent members, because
e company provides the union's income.

For all these reasons the IWW does not permit dues checkoff.

Political Alliances and Government Elections

The IWW does not express a preference for any political party or candidate.
These are not union questions, and must be settled by each union member
according to personal conscience. The union is formed to reach and enforce
ecisions about organizational questions. What the majority decides about any
ndustrial question is the decision by which all must abide. For that reason it is
ut of order to attempt to reach decisions about questions not related to industry.
here is no practical value to our union or its members in diverting resources to
nstitutions outside of our capacity to control or govern.

For this reason, our constitution forbids the union from supporting a political
arty or specific political groups. We call all workers to join the union, regardless of
their other affiliations. And this policy ensures that the union does not infringe on
the rights of members. Union members may settle these questions without union
interference.

This does not mean that the IWW is indifferent to the great social and
nomic questions of the day. Quite the contrary. We believe that those ques
are rooted in the exploitation of workers in the workplace as a consequen
the wage system. The union will fight against any organization that support
wage system. We support workplace democracy
oppose all exploitation of workers.

The activity of the rank and file, and not the "leaders," will advance the cause of labor.

We don't put our trust in politicians bec
they may be allies one moment and enemies
next. We put our trust in our fellow workers an
the strength of our organization.

We believe that change comes from us,
political parties or politicians. With indus
power in our hands, we change our working c
ditions. Loggers in Lumber Workers Industrial Union 120 in the Pacific No
west won the eight-hour day not by appealing to the state legislature,
through direct action on the job when they halted work after eight ho
Restaurant workers in New York forced their employer to address numer
safety hazards by walking off the job. These improvements to our lives (deta
above in the "Direct Action" section) were won through the power of the work
not the state.

Let the truly class-conscious political parties and politicians support
IWW as we organize class-consciousness and industrial democracy everywh
Let them support us as we prepare for a general strike. Our Constitutional pro
bition against endorsing political parties or candidates permits the One Big Un
to act as a unifying force for workers everywhere.

No Factional Control

In order to prevent the control of our union by factions, or groups who seek
control the union's finances, committees, and policies, the current IWW Co
stitution bans certain practices:

- Financial malfeasance by officers because efficient record-keeping a
rigidly honest accounting are enforced with monthly and annual financ
reports, all audited.

- Intervention against workers by the General Administration becau
workers in a shop have exclusive rights to decide on issues regar
ing their workplace. Strikes cannot be called or called off by officer
Strikes can only be called by the members concerned. Settlemen
can only be negotiated by committees elected by the workers in th
shop. Committee members and union officials are not allowed to cu
any deals with employers or engage in private interviews with bosse

No political parties can take over because political alliances are prohibited.
e One Big Union continues to develop, we should strive to protect our demo-
structure by ensuring the following practices are not allowed.

There can be no financial gain in factional rule because the pay for officers
should not exceed the average pay of the workers they represent. "General
Expense" accounts should be forbidden.

No powers should be given to officers except those needed to carry out the
instructions of the members. All negotiations should be carried out by the
workers' own elected committee.

Political or similar factions, seeking control of the union to subvert its facil-
ities, resources, or reputation to their own ends are prevented by the demo-
cratic policies that should be adopted by our ranks to ensure our own unity.

ficient Unionism

The union's source of strength is its members. The more directly we are
involved in union business, the stronger we are. Our liberation won't be
won by paying dues into a union treasury. While money helps the union
action, we can't purchase our freedom. What makes the union win for us all is
e effort and enthusiasm of its members—something that can't be bought. Our
ficiency is the result of our democratic structure, empowering the rank-and-
e. There is a myth that democracy makes for inefficiency. Our union experi-
ce disproves that myth. Workers acting in solidarity, with a democratic vote that
ves clear direction to our actions, is much more efficient than waiting on several
yers of management to take action on our behalf.

We strive to practice principles of solidarity and democracy effectively and
ficiently. We measure our effectiveness by what we are able to do with our united
rength, and our efficiency is the effort we must expend to win control back from
e capitalist class, whether in time, money, trouble, or other sacrifices. To smash
fly with a sledge hammer is no doubt effective, but it is hardly efficient. We want
aximum gains at minimum cost.

Direct participation comes together as a system of job committees and
lected union delegates who coordinate union business rather than full-time offi-
ials or business agents. It makes the IWW a force with which we can organize our
wn future. The organized self-reliance and local democracy of the component
arts of the IWW that enable us to handle problems in the most efficient and least
ostly way. We will always be stronger when we work together according to the
rganization's democratic will.

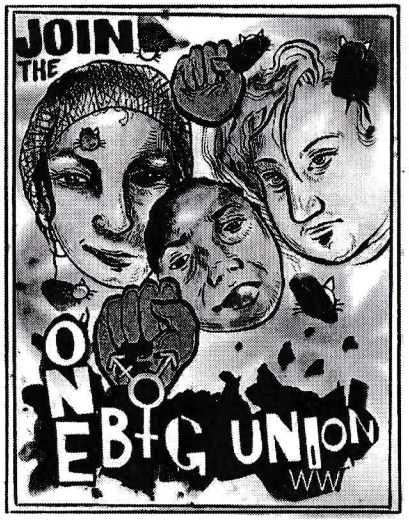
Even on a job that can't be unionized for now there is always something that can be improved, and collective action can lay the groundwork for later organizing.

What We Can Do

This pamphlet has summarized some of the IWW's best practices from our wide and varied history in the struggles of industry since the Union was started in 1905. Out of the experience of the many good members who have built and maintained the IWW, this pamphlet offers the working class a plan for industrial organization, a set of trustworthy principles, a body of policy and method, a guiding strategy, and tactics that can bring success. The Union seeks improvements not only in the fight for better wages and working conditions, but also in the struggle to establish a fair and liberating social order.

If your job is not unionized, get in touch with the IWW and we will help you and your fellow workers organize. If you are a member of another union you can still join the IWW and help us grow the One Big Union movement. Many members of the IWW also belong to other unions, to the benefit of both. They belong to the IWW because they want to be part of a larger solution, and they belong to another union through which they bargain on the job. These IWW members are among the most active members of their other unions and bring a commitment to solidarity and union democracy.

The IWW asks that members continue their membership no matter what job they switch to, or what industry that may currently work in. We ask that they make themselves fully acquainted with our ideas and policies so that they can fully participate in the union's process and efforts. We ask that they be able and willing to explain these ideas to other workers, and that they watch for every possible opportunity for this union to grow and to be of service to their fellow workers on their own and other jobs.



In short, the IWW seeks to achieve a world run by workers for the common good. It is up to us to do our part. While we are fighting for shorter hours, higher wages, better working conditions, and democratic grievance procedures, we are also helping build a better world.

LIST OF IWW INDUSTRIAL UNIONS

Department of Agriculture and Fisheries 100

110 Agricultural Workers:
All workers who cultivate land, raise crops, or work with livestock including those workers on farms, ranches, orchards and plantations, and those workers in supporting industries such as breeding and large animal veterinary services.

120 Forest and Lumber Workers:
All workers on tree farms, in forestry and logging operations, in saw and shingle mills, in preparing wood for fuel and manufacture, and in bark, brush and sap collection,

130 Fishery Workers:
All workers who fish and harvest on oceans, lakes, and rivers including those workers who are engaged in receiving, unloading, and processing catches at the wharf and those workers who specifically distribute these products.

140 Greenhouse and Nursery Workers:
All workers who produce, harvest and process crops grown under cover including those workers in nurseries, flower gardens, green- and hothouses, and those workers involved in the distribution of these products.

Department of Mining and Energy 200

210 Mine Workers:
All workers in mines extracting metals, coal, or minerals including those engaged in smelters, mills, and other reduction works, as well as workers engaged in processing and distributing these materials.

220 Energy Workers:
All workers who are involved in all forms of energy exploration, production, and harvesting including workers in refineries and processing facilities, and workers engaged in the distribution of these products.

Department of General Construction 300

310 Civil Construction Workers:
All workers who build transportation, water, and pipeline infrastructure.

320 Ship and Boat Builders:
All workers who build and repair ships, boats and small vessels including dry dock and support workers in these facilities.

330 Building Construction Workers:
All workers who construct, renovate, or demolish buildings including those workers employed by general construction contractors and in prefabrication of houses and major components.

340 Building Maintenance and Landscaping Workers:
All workers in routine commercial and residential building maintenance such as painting, plumbing, HVAC, and gutter cleaning. All workers not otherwise engaged who provide janitorial and landscaping services in privately owned establishments.

Department of Manufacture and General Production 400

410 Textile and Leather Workers:
All workers who manufacture material from natural or synthetic fibers, process or distribute leather and leather substitutes, or fabricate wearing apparel.

420 Wood Processing and Furniture Workers:
All workers who process wood products or build wood furniture.

430 Chemical Workers:
All workers who produce chemically-based products such as drugs, paint, rubber, explosives, medicines, chemicals, plastics, and synthetic fibers.

440 Metal and Machinery Workers:
All workers in metal production including steel mills, aluminum plants, tool and die shops, and other metal-related industries. All workers engaged in the production, repair, or maintenance of metal or composite products including agricultural machinery, automobiles, locomotives, bicycles, or aircraft.

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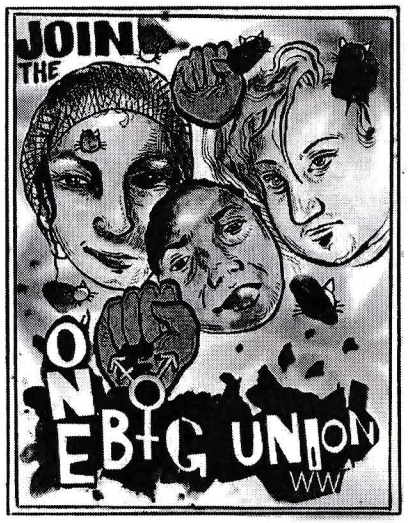

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450 Printing and Publishing Workers:
All workers who produce and distribute newspapers, books, catalogs, and other printed matter including reporters, journalists, staff writers, photographers, graphic artists, researchers, and programmers within the publishing industry.

460 Food Product Workers:
All workers, except agricultural and fishery workers, who produce, process and distribute foodstuffs, beverages, and tobacco products.

470 Electronics and Instrument Workers:
All workers who manufacture and assemble electronic devices, musical instruments, jewelry and timepieces, and components of technical, medical, and scientific instruments.

480 Glass, Pottery, and Mineral Workers:
All workers who produce glass, pottery, chinaware, tile, bricks, wallboard, lime, gypsum, cement, abrasives, and other non-metallic mineral products other than fuels.

490 Pulp and Paper Mill Workers:
All workers in pulp and paper mills.

Department of Transportation and Communication 500

510 Marine Workers:
All workers in cargo and passenger transportation by water. All repair, maintenance, and supply workers specific to the marine industry. All workers in ports, including food, beverage, and newsstand workers.

520 Railroad Workers:
All workers in long distance railway freight and passenger transportation. All repair,maintenance, and supply workers specific to the railroad industry. All workers in railroad terminals, including food, beverage, and newsstand workers

530 Ground Transportation and Transit Workers:
All workers in freight and passenger transportation by ground including truck, commuter rail, bus, limousine, cab, and pedicab. All workers in towing and storage of motor vehicles. All repair, maintenance, and supply workers specific to the industry. All workers in bus and transit stations, including food, beverage, and newsstand workers.

540 Postal, Express, and Message Delivery Workers:
All non-governmental workers in processin transfer, and delivery of letters and messages motor vehicle and bicycle.

550 Air Transport Workers:
All workers in freight and passenger transport tion by air. All repair, maintenance, and supp workers specific to the aviation industry. A workers in airports including food, beverage, an newsstand workers.

560 General Distribution Workers:
All workers in general wholesale and warehous facilities not attached to a particular industry. A workers engaged in support activities for tran portation and storage of goods including packin and crating services, inspection and survey se vices, freight-forwarding services, etc.

570 Communications and Internet Technology Workers:
All workers who provide and maintain telephon internet, telegraph, satellite communication an computer operations, including programmin and networking. All workers engaged in the instal lation, maintenance, and repair of communica tions cable, signal towers, transmitters, etc.

580 Information Service Workers:
All workers who collect, store, and retrieve infor mation by conducting market research, opinio polling, fundraising, and archival and statistica research services. All workers in telephone ca centers, telephone answering services, captionin services, mailbox and mail forwarding service All workers not otherwise organized who work i communications and public relations.

590 Video, Audio, and Film Production Workers:
All workers who produce recorded music, vide games, motion pictures, and radio and televi sion programs or distribute them for sale, renta or broadcast. All workers involved in providin auxiliary services to the industry including foo and beverage, catering, talent booking, set an costume production, equipment and locatio rentals, bulk duplication of recorded media, etc.

Department of Public Service 600

610 Health Service Workers:
All workers employed in hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, and medical offices, includ ng workers in rehabilitation centers, medical esearch services, health-maintenance orga izations, medical billing services, and ther industries auxiliary to health services.

613 Incarcerated Workers:
All incarcerated workers in the prison industry.

620 Education and Research Workers:
All workers in educational institutions includ ng educators, students (except those mainly mployed outside the education industry), and hose in industries auxiliary to education includ ng testing services, educational consulting ervices, dedicated school bus services, etc. All orkers in research institutions including foun dations and museums, enterprises primarily ngaged in providing technical and scientific ser ices, and in research laboratories not attached to ducational institutions.

630 Performing Arts, Recreation, and Tourism Workers:
All workers involved in the creation and dissemination of the performing arts including writers, dancers, and performing artists in theaters, concert halls, opera houses, movie theaters, and similar establishments. All workers involved in the recreation and tourist industries including amusement parks, carnivals, race tracks, casinos, cruise ships, guiding services and tourist information centers. All workers involved in providing auxiliary services to the industry including food and beverage, catering, talent booking, set and costume production, equipment and location rentals, etc.

631 Freelance and Temporary Workers:
All workers who are engaged in multiple industries on a temporary or short-term contractual basis who obtain their own clients or are engaged through employment and temporary staffing agencies including writers, editors, language teachers, translators, photographers, videographers, sound technicians, visual artists, graphic artists, designers, programmers, call center workers, warehouse workers, construction workers, etc.

640 Restaurant, Hotel, and Catering Workers:
All workers in facilities for food and beverage services, public accommodation, and catering services not dedicated to serving a particular industry.

650 General, Legal, Public Interest, and Financial Office Workers:
All workers who provide legal services including those in law offices and attorneys who are actual wage- workers, title settlement offices, title search services, notary offices, and those who provide services to the legal industry including law publishers, private investigators, legal researchers, and brief-writing and transcription services. All workers who provide financial and insurance services including those in banks, stock and commodities exchanges, real estate, accounting, and insurance companies. All workers for enterprises primarily engaged in providing humane services to the public, other than health services, including those in religious, charitable, public advocacy, employment agencies, community, and service organizations not otherwise organized.

651 Government Workers:
All civil service workers at the federal, state, provincial, county, and municipal levels not otherwise organized including office staff, librarians, utility and construction inspectors, firefighters, recreation workers, and public works.

660 Retail Workers:
All workers in retail establishments unless otherwise organized.

670 Utility and Sanitation Workers:
All non-government workers engaged in the supply, maintenance, and transmission of gas, electric, water, and sewer services. All workers employed in the collection and processing of disposable and recyclable materials.

680 Household and Personal Service Workers:
All workers performing services in and around the home including homemakers, cooks, maids, and house cleaning services. All workers performing personal services for individuals and families, including barber shops, beauty salons, massage services, dry cleaning and laundry establishments, tailor shops, funeral parlors and crematoria, veterinary offices and other animal care centers.

690 Sex Industry Workers:
All workers who use sexuality as the primary tool of their industry including telephone and webcam sex workers, actors, erotic massage services, erotic and escort services, and dancers and models in night clubs, exotic dance clubs and peep shows.

Preamble to the Constitution of the Industrial Workers of the World

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

If you agree with the ideas expressed in this booklet, that problems faced by the working class can be resolved only through the organization and direct action of workers in solidarity, then take the next logical step and join the IWW. If there is no IWW office in your area, nor an IWW delegate on your job, contact us at:

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